

**Council on Human Rights**  
**Friday, June 17, 2005**  
**Council's Boardroom, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor**  
**Pocahontas Building**  
**1:00 p.m.**

**Council Members Present:** Jon D. Strother, Chairman; Charles Baugham; Douglas Boulter; Jagdish Singh; and Leslie Teets.

**Staff Present:** Rita R. Henderson, Director; Sandra D. Norman, Assistant Director; Gerald Snead, EEO Manager; and Timothy Wilson, Administration/Operations Manager.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the February 4, 2005 meeting were adopted with one (1) change.

**Director's Report**

Ms. Henderson presented an overview of the annual conference of the Virginia Association of Human Rights Commissioners (VAHRC) that was held on June 11, 2005 in Virginia Beach. The three (3) staff members that attended were: Sandy Norman, Tim Wilson, and the director. Three (3) action items were discussed and acted upon during the conference: (1) a resolution was passed that encouraged commissions and the Council to support the Advancement Project. The project helps convicted felons that have completed their sentences and participated in workshops and training sessions to complete and process the necessary paperwork to have their rights restored; (2) a vote was taken to support Jon Strother's proposed amendments to the Virginia Human Rights Act; and (3) a 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee was formed to organize and hold a program to coincide with the next annual conference. Ms. Henderson also reported on the slate of newly elected officers and the association's annual awards recipients.

Ms. Henderson reported that the Council has met its contractual obligation with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and has been continuously successful in providing assistance to citizens by answering inquiries, making referrals, tracking bills, and following up on information that is needed for localities interested in forming local human rights commission. The Council has also answered inquiries from the General Assembly, Governor's office, and other state agencies regarding legislation. The Council followed several bills of interest that included: HB 1750, HB 2110, and SB 1079 that were voted down and HB 2907 and SB 1258 that were passed by the General Assembly.

The Council co-hosted its first Human Rights Day Forum on Thursday, April 21, 2005 with the Baltimore District Office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Highlights from the forum included an overview of two (2) workshops, Understanding the Partnership, and a Legal Update. Ms. Jeanne Goldberg, Senior Attorney Advisor in the Office of Legal Counsel at the EEOC and Marty Parrish of the Attorney General's office conducted the legal update workshop. The panelists for the Understanding the Partnership workshop included Ms. Patricia Glisson, Officer-in-Charge of the Richmond Area Office (EEOC), Ms. Sandra Byrd, State and Local Coordinator, Baltimore Office (EEOC), and Ms. Sandra Norman, Assistant Director of the Virginia Council on Human Rights (VCHR). Two (2) keynote speakers were featured during the Forum, The Honorable Roger Gregory, Judge of the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit, U.S. Court of Appeals, and the Honorable L. Douglas Wilder, Mayor, City of Richmond. Ms. Henderson reported that the Forum was successful and the feedback from its attendees reflected the same sentiment.

The following community and business sponsors contributed to the success of the conference: Philip Morris USA, Dominion, Bon Secours Richmond Health System, CapitalOne, James River Valley Chapter - The Links, Incorporated, SunTrust, and CBS 6.

The Council's board has four (4) members whose terms will expire on June 30, 2005. Those board members are: the Vice Chairman Christopher Peace, Douglas Boulter, Thomas Knox, and Maria Lopez-Otin. Ms. Henderson stated that Mrs. Lopez-Otin and Mr. Knox were unable to attend their final board meeting and for this reason Certificates of Recognition will be mailed to them. She then presented Mr. Boulter with a Certificate of Recognition and thanked him for his service to the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. She indicated that the Vice Chairman's Certificate of Recognition will be mailed to him.

Ms. Henderson reported that the mediation program continues to be successful, resulting in notable amounts of monetary settlements negotiated. Mr. Snead, the agency's investigator, was recognized for the vital role that he plays to ensure that a mediation session is successful. The three (3) interns that assisted the Council during the year were: Kristen McLauren, Veronica Jordan, and Antonio Washington. All three (3) were students at Virginia State University. Michelle Satterland, a volunteer and recent law school graduate from Wisconsin and Kanisha Adkins, a part-time staff member also assisted the Council this year.

A discussion was held on the Council's current open caseloads, appeals, mediation process, the adverse impact of the agency's budget on the agency's timeliness to complete tasks, and the Council's jurisdiction involving local government employees.

## **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman gave an overview of his proposed amendments to the Virginia Human Rights Act along with the resolution of support from the Virginia Association of Human Rights Commissioners (VAHRC). After a timely discussion of the proposed amendments, it was moved by Member Baugham that the Council accept the proposed amendments. It was seconded by Member Teets and the motion was defeated after four (4) members voted to accept the motion and one (1) voted against it.

The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking Ms. Henderson and staff for updating the board on the agency's fiscal year end activities and welcoming Rev. Baugham back to the board's activities after his illness.

Submitted by,

Jon Strother  
Chairman

Timothy Wilson  
Recorder